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Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 177847

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MASS, IR

SUBJECT: MATERIAL ON AWACS DEBATE

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER TO PRESIDENT FROM SENATOR HUMPHREY:

"DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN ASSISTANCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS HAS CONSIDERED YOUR ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL TO SELL IRAN THE AIRBORNE WARNING AND CONTROL SYSTEM (AWACS). WE RECOGNIZE AMERICA'S LEGITIMATE INTEREST IN PROVIDING IRAN WITH AN ADEQUATE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. IT IS THE VIEW OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE THAT IRAN'S ABILITY TO DEFEND ITSELF SERVES THE COMMON INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES AND HER ALLIES.

"OUR DESIRE TO MEET IRAN'S LEGITIMATE AIR DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS, HOWEVER, MUST BE WEIGHED AGAINST THE SPECIFIC CONCERNS WE HAVE ON THE SALE OF THE AWACS SYSTEM. THESE CONCERNS, AS THEY EMERGED DURING SUB-COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS, INCLUDED: (1) THE DANGER OF COMPROMISE OF SENSITIVE U.S. TECHNOLOGY; (2) THE CONFIDENTIAL

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IMPACT OF THE SALE ON THE MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL MILITARY BALANCE; AND (3) THE ABILITY OF IRAN CONTINUALLY TO ABSORB SOPHISTICATED U.S. WEAPONRY WITHOUT INCREASING

THE ALREADY LARGE AMERICAN PRESENCE THERE.

"WE BELIEVE THAT INTRODUCTION OF THESE NEW CONSIDERATIONS

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AND THE FACT THAT THIS SALE IS AN EXCEPTION TO YOUR NEW ARMS SALES POLICY WARRANTS A MORE COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVES. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE SUBCOMMITTEE REQUESTS AND URGES THAT YOU CONSIDER TEMPORARILY WITHDRAWING THE NOTICE TO THE CONGRESS OF A LETTER OF OFFER TO IRAN TO ALLOW TIME FOR BOTH THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND THE CONGRESS TO CONSIDER FURTHER THESE IMPORTANT ISSUES. SUCH A WITHDRAWAL WOULD AVOID THE NEED TO VOTE FOR SUCH A RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL IN ORDER TO GAIN TIME FOR FAIR CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSAL.

"SHOULD THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AFTER RENEWED DELIBERATION CONCLUDE THAT IT SHOULD PROCEED WITH THE AWACS SALE, THE SUBCOMMITTEE URGES THAT CERTAIN ASSURANCES BE MADE TO THE CONGRESS. THESE ASSURANCES ARE:

"-- REMOVAL FROM IRAN'S AWACS OF U.S. ENCIPHERMENT GEAR AND OTHER EQUIPMENT CITED BY THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AS ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE.

"-- CONTINUOUS U.S. MONITORING OF IRANIAN SECURITY PRECAUTIONS WITH A PROVISO IN THE LETTER OF OFFER THAT SALES CAN BE TERMINED IF SECURITY PRECAUTIONS ARE INADEQUATE.

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"-- STIPULATION IN THE LETTER OF OFFER THAT AWACS IS TO BE USED DEFENSIVELY ONLY, AND HENCE IS NOT TO BE DEPLOYED OVER THE TERRITORY OF IRAN'S BORDERING STATES WITHOUT THEIR PERMISSION.

"-- CONSIDERATION OF ANY IRANIAN REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL SOPHISTICATED U.S. FIGHTER AIRCRAFT SHALL TAKE INTO SERIOUS ACCOUNT THE "MULTIPLIER EFFECT" OF AWACS UPON IRAN'S EXISTING FIGHTER AIRCRAFT.

"-- TRAINING OF IRANIAN CREWS SHOULD TAKE PLACE ENTIRELY IN THE UNITED STATES, AND NO U.S. CITIZENS WILL PARTICIPATE IN ROUTINE OPERATIONS MISSIONS OF THE AWACS OVER IRAN.

"-- THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL CONDUCT A DETAILED STUDY OF IRAN'S ABILITY CONTINUALLY TO ABSORB HIGH TECHNOLOGY WITHOUT ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR U.S. TECHNICIANS, AND SHALL PROVIDE THE RESULTS OF THAT STUDY TO THE

CONGRESS BEFORE ANY ADDITIONAL REQUESTS ARE MADE FOR THE SALE OF SOPHISTICATED TECHNOLOGY TO IRAN.

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"THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE SUBCOMMITTEE HAS FORWARDED WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION OR PREJUDICE TO THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE THE PROPOSED RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL ON THE SALE OF AWACS TO IRAN. THE FULL COMMITTEE WILL CONSIDER THAT RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL ON THURSDAY, JULY 28, 1977.

"THE SUBCOMMITTEE TAKES THIS DECISION IN AN EFFORT TO FIND A COOPERATIVE SOLUTION THAT BEST SERVES THE INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND IRAN. SINCERELY, HUBERT H. HUMPHREY, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN ASSISTANCE."

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF REPLY FROM THE PRESIDENT TO SENATOR HUMPHREY:
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"TO SENATOR HUMPHREY: I HAVE RECEIVED YOUR LETTER OF JULY 27 INFORMING ME OF THE ACTION OF YOUR SUBCOMMITTEE CONCERNING THE PROPOSED SALE TO IRAN OF THE AIRBORNE WARNING AND CONTROL SYSTEM (AWACS), AND I WELCOME THE FACT THAT THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE SUBCOMMITTEE HAS FORWARDED WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE THE PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR DISAPPROVAL OF THE SALE OF AWACS TO IRAN. I APPRECIATE THE COMMITTEE'S EFFORTS TO HELP US FIND THE SOLUTION TO THIS ISSUE THAT BEST SERVES THE INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND IRAN.

"I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE YOU THAT IT IS MY JUDGMENT THAT THE IMPACT OF THE SALE OF AWACS TO IRAN WILL BE TO STABILIZE THE MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL MILITARY BALANCE. AS TO THE SIX ASSURANCES REQUESTED IN YOUR LETTER, I AM PREPARED TO MAKE THEM TO YOU. IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, I ALSO TRUST THAT THE FULL COMMITTEE WILL NOW CONCLUDE THAT THE SALE OF THE AWACS TO IRAN IS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES AND THAT THE RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL WILL NOT BE ENDORSED.

"I THANK YOU AND THE MEMBERS OF YOUR COMMITTEE AGAIN FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE SPIRIT IN WHICH YOU HAVE ADDRESSED THIS COMPLEX ISSUE. SINCERELY, JIMMY CARTER."

3. IN EFFORT TO FIRM UP SUPPORT IN THE HOUSE PRESIDENT SENT FOLLOWING LETTER TO SPEAKER O'NEILL:

"TO SPEAKER TIP O'NEILL: I ATTACH VERY GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE SALE OF THE AIRBORNE WARNING AND CONTROL SYSTEM (AWACS) TO IRAN. I APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT FOR THIS DECISION AND HOPE THAT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WILL
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SUPPORT IT. I FULLY UNDERSTAND THE CONCERNS NOW BEING RAISED IN CONGRESS ABOUT THIS SALE, BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT ALL THESE FACTORS WERE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED PRIOR TO MY DECISION.

"I TOOK PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE EXCELLENT SECURITY RECORD OF IRAN DURING OUR LONG MILITARY RELATIONSHIP, AND THE TOTALLY SUCCESSFUL SECURITY MEASURES IRAN HAS USED IN MAINTAINING THE HIGH TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS WE HAVE ALREADY TRANSFERRED. THE AWACS WILL CERTAINLY BE AS SECURE IN IRAN AS ANY OTHER ALLIED OR FRIENDLY COUNTRIES. I BELIEVE THAT THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES, AS WELL AS IRAN'S NATIONAL INTERESTS WILL BE WELL SERVED BY THE COURSE I HAVE CHOSEN. MOREOVER, IRAN AND OTHER NATIONS WILL DEAL WITH US IN CONFIDENCE ONLY WHEN THEY PERCEIVE CONTINUITY AND STEADFASTNESS OF PURPOSE IN OUR FOREIGN POLICY.

"CONGRESSIONAL REJECTION OF THIS SALE WOULD CARRY WITH IT SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. GOING FORWARD WITH IT WILL STRENGTHEN NOT ONLY IRAN BUT SERVE OUR INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS AS WELL. SINCERELY, JIMMY CARTER."

4. LETTER CONTAINED FOLLOWING POST SCRIPT BY PRESIDENT: "CAREFULLY DEFINED ASSURANCES WILL BE GIVEN TO THE CONGRESS REGARDING THE SECURITY OF OUR TECHNOLOGY AND MAINTENANCE OF MID EAST PEACE (SEE LETTER OF SENATOR HUMPHREY). J.C." VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIR DEFENSE, AWACS, MILITARY SALES, WARNING SYSTEMS
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Enclosure: n/a
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SAS ID: 1808211
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MATERIAL ON AWACS DEBATE
TAGS: MASS, IR
To: TEHRAN
Type: TE
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